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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

4 June 1968

Moscow Reaffirms Support for Ulbricht

Ulbricht solicited and apparently received Soviet encouragement to keep up a tough line toward Bonn and Czechoslovakia during his recent discussions in Moscow.

The communique issued following the session on 30 May implicitly criticized Czechoslovakia, which was warned of the dangers it faced from imperialist political and ideological subversion. East Germany has been the most vociferous critic of the recent changes in Prague, and the communique reflected at least Soviet approval of Pankow's views.

The communique also warned that attempts to incorporate West Berlin into the Federal Republic, and "related provocations against socialist countries," would continue to be rebuffed. Regarding Berlin access, the communique endorsed the "protective measures" taken by the GDR in the form of travel bans on certain West German citizens transiting East Germany. The communique stated that such restrictions were fully in accord with the GDR's rights and obligations under existing international agreements.

The inclusion of the term "obligations" may be intended to signal Bonn and the Allies that the Soviets retain overall control of possible East German restrictions on access and that a serious crisis involving Allied rights is not in the offing.

In return for underwriting the East German position the Soviets have strengthened their hold on East Germany by making it even more dependent economically on the USSR. The two countries have agreed to a unified computer system and to closely coordinate economic planning.

Ulbricht probably sought Soviet support as a necessary counter to Bonn's policies in Eastern Europe, which if successful, could result in a lessening of East German influence in the socialist camp.

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Czechoslovak Party Leaders Rallying the Locals

With the example of party boss Dubcek, who spoke to 6,000 activists in Brno on 3 June, Czechoslovak party leaders fanned out throughout the nation to explain the results of the latest party plenum.

At the meeting, which was concluded on 1 June, former party boss Novotny and six supporters, were suspended from the party pending investigation of their past performances. The theme of the countrywide meetings is to restore party unity. This probably means that criteria are being set for the selection of delegates to the extraordinary 14th congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which will open on 9 September. The object of the congress will be to elect a central committee "which will enjoy the full confidence and authority necessary for insuring a united party policy."

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Albanian Reaction to the Unrest in France

Tirana is using the current turmoil in France not only to attack "bourgeois capitalism", but also to condemn Soviet "revisionism" for betraying the workers' movement.

Albania's propagandists have whole-heartedly endorsed the student-worker riots in Paris while simultaneously denouncing Moscow for not endorsing the French workers' demands. The French Communist Party also has been censured for negotiating with capitalists instead of taking to the streets in a bloody, "swashbuckling", Marxist-Leninist class-struggle.

The Hoxha regime's reaction to the recent unrest in Europe has been one of self-righteous indignation with a pervading "I told you so attitude"--particularly where shortcomings and failures can be attributed to Soviet policies. De Gaulle has been spared the bitter personal attacks that Tirana has levied on Novotny, Dubcek, Kosygin and Brezhnev, but Tito probably will receive the largest verbal bombardment following the student riots in Belgrade.

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East German Populace Oppose Church Demolition

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Despite strong popular reaction the 400 year-old Leipzig University church was demolished on 30 May to make way for more modern reconstruction work.

Apparently local party and government officials were under pressure from students and clergy who opposed the plan. Sympathetic students at Halle University were stopped from going to Leipzig to stage a sit-in protest. [redacted] church groups and students had endeavored to circulate petitions and otherwise lobby against destruction of the old landmark. Late last month, Erich Honecker, the party's number two man referred to the difficulty the regime had encountered getting popular endorsement of the reconstruction plans. [redacted]

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